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ABSTRACT

Guidelines are presented to assist colleges in preparing for an evaluation by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The seven chapters provide: an outline of the purposes of self-study and the Commission's expectations for self-study; advice and suggestions for establishing a self-study committee, developing a self-study plan, and organizing and conducting the self-study process; a discussion of the evaluative criteria in the self-study process and suggested questions related to each of the criteria; guidance on the elements of the self-study report that are essential to the Commission's needs; information specifically for institutions preparing for evaluation for initial and continued candidacy; advice on focused evaluations; and information on resources available on self-study from both the Commission and other sources. It is noted that preparation for a Commission evaluation begins approximately 2 years before the on-site evaluation when the chief executive officer of the institution receives a reminder letter from the Commission. An index refers the reader to the locations of various Commission policy statements in either the guide or companion documents. (SW)

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A GUIDE TO SELF-STUDY FOR COMMISSION EVALUATION

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COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
1986-88

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North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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Preface

The Commission has made conducting a periodic program of self-study a primary obligation of each institution seeking or continuing affiliation with it, both to establish a basis for its evaluations and to foster the attitudes and structures of self-evaluation that every institution needs to survive and progress.

The Commission staff have prepared this 1986-88 edition of *A Guide to Self-Study for Commission Evaluation* to assist institutions preparing for evaluation by the Commission as they organize and conduct their self-study processes and report the results. Together with the *Handbook of Accreditation* and the *Manual for the Evaluation Visit*, the *Guide* provides institutions and team members with information on the principles, policies, and procedures currently governing the Commission's accreditation process. The *Handbook* is the core of this set of documents, and both the *Manual* and this *Guide* assume their reader's familiarity with it. The *Guide* is especially addressed to institutions, but it is intended for use by consultant-evaluators. All three documents are revised and republished biennially. Significant changes in policies and procedures occurring between publications are reported in the Commission's *Briefing* newsletter. Questions about current policies and procedures should be directed to the Commission office.

The *Guide* is organized as follows:

- **Chapter I** outlines the purposes of self-study and the Commission's expectations for self-study.
- **Chapter II** offers advice and suggestions for establishing a self-study committee, developing a self-study plan, and organizing and conducting the self-study process.
- **Chapter III** includes a discussion on the Evaluative Criteria in the self-study process and offers a series of suggested questions related to each of the criteria.
- **Chapter IV** highlights the elements of the Self-Study Report essential to the Commission's needs.
- **Chapter V** provides information specifically for institutions preparing for evaluation for initial and continued candidacy.
- **Chapter VI** is addressed to institutions preparing for focused evaluations.
- **Chapter VII** provides information on resources available on self-study from both the Commission and other sources.

The *Handbook*, *Guide* and *Manual* include an index which tells the reader where information on the Commission's various policy statements can be found in each of the three documents.

The Commission staff hope that this *Guide*, together with the *Handbook* and *Manual*, will answer most of the questions about the self-study process and report that institutions and visiting team members will have. Please notify us if they do not.

I. Self-Study in Accreditation

Purposes of Self-Study in Accreditation

The self-study process in accreditation serves two purposes:

- to provide the information necessary to determine that the institution meets the Commission's criteria
- to encourage institutional improvement

Insisting as it has since the thirties that institutional accreditation be based on an institution's capacity to fulfill its mission, the Commission requires from the institution sufficient evidence on which to make an accrediting decision. Almost three decades ago, the Commission determined that institutional self-study best provides the evidence. Recognizing that careful self-evaluation is crucial to any institution's effectiveness, the Commission has continued to require periodic self-study as a major component of the accreditation process. The Commission requires that an institution formally examine itself, assess its strengths and concerns, and plan how to capitalize on those strengths and eliminate or alleviate those concerns. In doing so, an institution documents its present effectiveness and its strategies to continue and improve that effectiveness.

The Commission's Expectations of Institutional Self-Study

While the Commission does not prescribe the details of an individual institution's self-study process, it does require that every self-study process for candidacy or accreditation be guided by several general principles:

- **that it is built on ongoing self-study efforts.** Ideally, the self-study for accreditation should flow naturally out of onging processes of institutional self-evaluation.
- **that it begins with a plan.** The Commission believes that an effective self-study process must serve both internal and external purposes. Foresight and thoughtful structuring of the self-study process enable institutions to gain maximum benefits from the time and energy expended.

- **that it focuses on the institution.** The Commission does not accredit departments or programs, although evaluating an institution in terms of the Commission's Criteria requires that all of the institution's component parts be examined. Ultimately, the information gathered through evaluation of each part must be used to formulate an evaluation of the institution as a whole.

- **that it is *evaluative* rather than *descriptive*.** It is not enough for a Self-Study Report simply to describe the programs, operation and environment of an institution. A Self-Study Report which only describes the institution does not provide the information needed for the Commission's evaluation process.

- **that it produces a report showing that the institution satisfies the appropriate Criteria.** A self-study process for candidacy or accreditation can serve a variety of internal and external purposes, but—whatever else it may do—it must lead to a report which explicitly demonstrates that the institution meets the Commission's General Institutional Requirements and fulfills the appropriate Evaluative Criteria.

II. Organizing, Planning, and Conducting the Self-Study

Initiating the Self-Study Process

Preparation for Commission evaluation begins approximately two years before the on-site evaluation when the chief executive officer of the institution receives a reminder letter from the Commission. At this point and throughout the self-study process, the CEO's role is crucial. When the CEO makes it clear by both word and action that the self-study is an institutional priority, the value and success of the process are enhanced. To indicate the importance of the self-study to the institution, the CEO should appoint the self-study coordinator and the steering committee, should formally charge them with their task, and should provide them with the necessary support to carry out their charge, including support staff and clerical assistance.

Appointing the Steering Committee

The choice of the self-study coordinator and the members of the steering committee is an important factor in establishing the direction and tenor of the self-study. The self-study coordinator ordinarily chairs the self-study steering committee, serves as a resource person to the self-study work committees, and coordinates the preparation of the Self-Study Report.

Those chosen for the steering committee should be knowledgeable and energetic, and should have the respect of the institution's various constituencies. It is important that they be able to understand the importance of the institutional nature of the process. Each CEO will make these appointments according to his or her personal style of administrative decision-making, but Commission experience suggests that a broadly representative steering committee is likely to receive the cooperation necessary to carry out its task. The primary task of the steering committee is to develop a self-study plan and coordinate its implementation.

Preliminary Planning

Before developing its formal self-study plan, the steering committee should:

1. *Review institutional materials and processes:*

   - **Determine any institutional goals for the process.** If various constituencies within the institution hope that the process will accomplish certain ends then these expectations should be made explicit and incorporated into the Steering Committee's plans.

   - **Review existing committee structures.** A self-study process need not be constructed from scratch, nor need it involve a new layer of committees. The steering committee should decide how best to integrate the structures for self-study with the structures already in place.

   - **Survey the institution's existing evaluation and planning processes.** Institutions engage in such processes for a variety of reasons, including the expectations and requirements of their governing boards and those of external agencies to which the institutions are related. Some institutions have developed evaluation processes as a part of applications for or as conditions of external funding. Others engage in periodic evaluation for continued recognition by specialized accrediting agencies. Increasingly, institutions have developed internal evaluation processes to inform decision-making. Rather than duplicate work that has already been done, the steering committee should inventory and use the information gained through these other evaluation processes in its self-study for the Commission.

   - **Review the documents of the institution's most recent comprehensive evaluation by the Commission and all subsequent Commission and/or staff actions.** This review helps to establish a context for the current evaluation. Moreover, the visiting team receives all of these documents; it will want to know how the institution has changed as a result of its interaction with the Commission. It is also useful to review the institution's last Self-Study Report, but be aware that, because of significant change in Commission policies and procedures, the substance and organization of that document may not be an appropriate model for the current process.

2. ***Review Commission materials and processes:***

- **Read the *Handbook*, *Guide*, and *Manual* to be informed fully of the Commission's procedures and its expectations.** In particular, the Committee should study carefully the Commission's Criteria for Candidacy or Accreditation (including the General Institutional Requirements and the Evaluative Criteria) in the *Handbook of Accreditation* and in this *Guide*. Since these Criteria are the foundation of the Commission's evaluation process, the institution's Self-Study Report must provide evidence of their being met.

- **Review recent correspondence from Commission staff about the nature of the visit.** The reminder letter sent to the institution's chief executive officer provides information on the evaluation. The letter also includes an invitation to the Commission's Self-Study Institute which the Self-Study Coordinator and members of the Steering Committee may wish to attend.

- **Examine the institution's current Statement of Affiliation Status.** Because the SAS defines the status of the institution with the Commission, its accuracy is critical. Read with care Chapter IV of the *Handbook* and pp. 24-31 of the *Manual* for a better understanding of the flexibility of the language in the SAS. Do not hesitate to call Commission staff for clarification, particularly if you find inaccuracies or decide to request changes.

Developing a Self-Study Plan

The committee's first major task is to plan a self-study process that both fits the needs of the institution and satisfies the requirements of the Commission. The steps the steering committee should take to develop this self-study plan (which is sometimes called the "prospectus" or "design") are relatively straightforward. It should:

- identify the objectives of the self-study process

- identify existing evaluation and planning processes and determine how best to integrate these into the self-study process for Commission evaluation

- formulate and implement committee structures consistent with the objectives

- establish timetables
- develop a preliminary outline of the Self-Study Report
- propose the evaluation methodologies to be used to gather and analyze data and specify the data which must be gathered and analyzed
- establish the reporting mechanisms—writing responsibilities—which will lead from data-gathering to the completed Self-Study Report

It is in designing a strategy for self-study that the institution can be most creative. For example, the self-study process may be used as an opportunity to reconsider and revise the institution's mission. The institution may wish to study enrollment trends; or to assess the impact of a new governance system; or to begin work on a long-range plan; or to evaluate and revise such a plan. These and other objectives can be compatible with the self-study for accreditation, provided that the self-study process yields the information necessary for the institution to demonstrate in its Self-Study Report that it meets the Criteria for Candidacy or Accreditation.

Because the Criteria cut across functional areas of an institution, one significant task in developing the self-study plan is to plot clearly how an evaluation of the functions and operations of the institution will provide evidence that the Criteria for Candidacy or Accreditation are met.

Once a preliminary plan is completed, it should be submitted to the Commission staff for review.

Conducting the Self-Study

The ways in which the self-study process is conducted will vary according to the scope, nature and emphasis of the self-study plan. They will also vary according to the size, complexity and character of the institution. No single pattern is appropriate to all institutions.

Ad hoc committees are a common mechanism for self-study and should be created in accordance with the self-study plan. It may be wise to include on committees, or at least to provide an opportunity for reactions from, persons who are not directly engaged in the area under study (e.g., student services should not be studied by student services personnel alone). It is helpful to involve those whose interests might be affected by the area (e.g., a student on the student services committee).

A key to the effectiveness of the institutional committees is providing for adequate communication among the various committees and between each committee and the steering committee. And, regardless of how the institution is organized for self-study, there should be some means for communicating with the community. While it is not necessary to have everyone in the institution on a committee, the steering committee needs to establish means of informing all the institution's constituencies of preliminary findings and developments throughout the self-study process. It should also encourage their responses.

III. The Evaluative Criteria in the Self-Study Process

The Criteria as Bases for Evaluation

Evaluation requires that the quality of an object be judged in relation to some measure. In the Commission's evaluation for accreditation the object is the postsecondary institution; the basis upon which the institution is judged is its ability to meet the Criteria for Accreditation (including the General Institutional Requirements and the Evaluative Criteria).

In an evaluation for accreditation, the **Evaluative Criteria** are:

1. the institution has clear and publicly stated purposes, consistent with its mission and appropriate to a postsecondary educational institution;

2. the institution has effectively organized adequate human, financial and physical resources into educational and other programs to accomplish its purposes;

3. the institution is accomplishing its purposes;

4. the institution can continue to accomplish its purposes.

The institution's evidence that it fulfills the Criteria is contained in the Self-Study Report, and that report then serves as a basis for an external evaluation by a team of consultant-evaluators representing the Commission. This chapter provides a general discussion of the Evaluative Criteria and some suggested questions related to each. Additional comments on the Evaluative Criteria are found in Chapter II of *A Handbook of Accreditation.*

General Institutional Requirements

Demonstrating that the institution meets the General Institutional Requirements requires examining specific details about its programs, organization, operation and public disclosure. Details of the General Institutional Requirements are found in Chapter II of the *Handbook*.

Evaluative Criterion One

"The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes, consistent with its mission and appropriate to a postsecondary educational institution."

A postsecondary institution's mission and purposes provide the rationale for both its establishment and the objectives of its current operations. They reveal the philosophical stance of the institution's designers toward education and provide a framework for maintaining the institution's integrity and planning its development. They point to the heritage of the institution and how it fits within the framework of education at the postsecondary level. They explain how the institution fits within the framework of postsecondary education, and how it endorses the traditions basic to higher education such as protecting academic and intellectual freedom and encouraging intellectual breadth and depth.

Postsecondary educational institutions serve many purposes. Some limit their endeavors to a single task or to a small number of related tasks; others address themselves to a great number of diverse tasks. In a system of postsecondary education characterized by diversity, it is crucial that each institution determine those purposes to which it will commit its limited resources.

The single-purpose institution or the institution with a small number of closely-related purposes is able to formulate a statement of its purposes as a whole. With a large, complex university this might be possible only at a very high level of generality, and each major unit or division may have a statement of purposes consistent with the mission of the larger institution.

There are many types of institutional purposes. Some are intellectual, some are affective; some are professional and occupational, some are "liberal"; some involve the pursuit of knowledge through research, others involve public service; some relate to values and attitudes, and others relate to training and skills.

As they are used here, "purposes" and "consistent" refer to the multiple and specific ends the institution wishes to achieve in order to carry out its more general "mission." Most institu-

tions have broad, general statements of mission that are relatively brief. Statements of purposes—of long- and short-range institutional goals, of programmatic objectives—are more specific and detailed. Statements of mission and purposes provide a guide for planning and operation as well as a framework for decision-making—about admissions and retention policies; about curricular and extracurricular programs; about the hiring, retention, tenure and promotion of faculty; about the institution's organizational structure; and about its financial and physical resource needs.

An institution's purposes will normally consider its role in its region and community, those structures of which it is a part, as well as in the nation. Its statement of purposes should be flexible enough to allow it to respond to new challenges and opportunities, but firm enough to allow it to resist pressures for haphazard or unplanned growth or retrenchment. Its statement should also establish the character and priorities by which the institution can cope with the many demands which it must face.

Accountability means that an institution accomplishes what it says it will do. While it is not a requirement that every purpose lend itself to quantitative measurement, it is important that institutions evaluate whether there is any way to confirm that specific purposes are being met.

An institution has a responsibility to keep the public informed of its educational goals and should publish a statement of mission and purposes in a critical public document such as a catalog.

Evaluative Criterion Two

"The institution has effectively organized adequate human, financial and physical resources into educational and other programs to accomplish its purposes."

This criterion calls for the evaluation of almost every facet of the institution. Areas which may be examined under this criterion include: institutional dynamics, human resources, financial resources, physical resources, educational programs and curriculum, support services, institutional services, and community resources.

Resources. An institution's available resources play a large part in determining the quality of the education it provides. Without sufficient human, financial and physical resources an institution cannot possibly achieve its purposes. Evaluation of an institution's resources should always be placed in the con-

text of the institution's mission and purposes. This aspect of the institutional self-study, sometimes characterized as input analysis, should treat several general areas.

- ***Human Resources.*** An institution's ability to accomplish its purposes is dependent on the students, the faculty, and the support staff it attracts and develops. The institution's purposes should be reflected in its student recruiting and admissions policies, as well as in the educational and other support services it provides to the students it enrolls. Its expectations of those students and its view of their potential for achievement must realistically consider the level of ability they bring with them. High school grades, class rank, the results of standardized aptitude tests and achievement tests, recommendations from high school personnel and others, evidence of special interests and abilities, personal qualities revealed in interviews—these and other measures of student readiness are commonly employed to assess that ability. There is no single standardized test score, for example, that every institution should use in its admissions decisions, but the criteria it does use should be consistent with its purposes, and with its instructional and other resources.

  The quality of its faculty and instructional staff is also critical to an institution's ability to achieve its purposes. The faculty and staff must be competent to accomplish the purposes the institution has set for itself. Therefore, the particular kinds of competencies the institution will seek in potential faculty and staff will vary according to its particular character and purposes. Proficiency in classroom teaching, for example, is often regarded as more significant in undergraduate programs than in graduate schools, where a scholar-apprentice relationship prevails. Institutions preparing students to enter occupations will usually be more interested in selecting faculty on the basis of work experience and occupational proficiency than on the basis of advanced degrees. Academically oriented institutions will emphasize possession of such degrees. Research oriented institutions, on the other hand, will emphasize research competence. The point is that the recruitment of faculty should be consistent with the institution's stated purposes, and so should its criteria for making tenure and promotion decisions.

The other groups of instructional and support staff —learning resources, admissions and financial aid, counseling—should also be selected and evaluated on qualifications that are consistent with the purposes of the institution as a whole as well as specific components of it.

- ***Financial Resources.*** An institution must have adequate financial support, properly administered, to provide the instructional and other services which are called for in its stated purposes. It should also be able to demonstrate that its budgeting, its accounting procedures and its audits reflect sound financial practices.

  The budget of an institution is a key document in evaluating it since, if properly constructed, it expresses the institution's priorities and plans. The institution's balance sheet and operating statement are also central to evaluating its financial management. They complement the budget since, while the budget is an expression of the institution's immediate priorities and plans, its financial reports are a gauge of its past priorities and achievements and a projection and basis for its future.

  It is impossible to establish generally applicable levels of acceptable income and expenditures that are valid for all institutions; in fact, it is not even possible to establish such levels for all institutions of the same type. Instead, the financial structure of each institution must be evaluated in terms of the resources it provides for the institution to accomplish its purposes, and the efficiency with which those resources are administered.

  There is no single pattern of "correct" distribution of income from various sources (tuition and fees, legislative appropriations, endowment earnings, annual gifts, grants from government and other sources, research contracts). An analysis of the trends evident in the distribution of an institution's sources of income, however, can be useful in understanding its financial situation. Similarly, there is no one pattern of expenditures that may be considered best, but an analysis of how the institution spends its funds clearly has meaning for evaluating its commitment to realizing its stated purposes.

- ***Physical Resources.*** The physical plant, including buildings, grounds, maintenance, and equipment on campus as well as off should also be evaluated in terms of the Criteria; as should instructional resources such as the library and laboratories. These physical resources must be adequate to accomplish the institution's purposes, and the institution should be able to provide evidence of this.

Organization. A self-study should also evaluate the institution's organizational patterns (including governance and administration), since the organization of resources determines how well they are used.

Patterns of institutional governance vary from institution to institution as do mechanisms for decision-making and implementation of those decisions. The obligations and responsibilities of each of the elements of the institutional community should be clear; so should the relationship between the administration and the institution's governing board or boards. In the United States, the ultimate governing authority of most institutions rests with lay boards representative of both the public interest and the interests of particular constituencies. The board should establish policies for the institution; translating those policies into action is the responsibility of the administration and the faculty. An institution's self-evaluation should relate its particular governing structure to its purposes and should examine that structure's relationship to the institution's ability to accomplish those purposes.

The increasing cost and complexity of higher education have often led supporting groups, both public and private, to establish coordinating boards. The extent to which such governing boards take part in the governance of institutions varies. If such a board affects the institution, its activities should be examined as a part of the self-study process.

Programs. An institution's academic and support programs are central to the task of fulfilling its mission and purposes. An evaluation of these programs should also be included in the self-study.

In reviewing the academic programs, the self-study process should include assessment of such things as appropriateness, rigor and viability of major degree programs; the breadth of supporting academic programs (minors, core curriculum, general education, developmental courses); and the level of institutional support (faculty, facilities, etc.) for the programs. Such a review should include as well an evaluation of the major documents which delineate the educational programs—catalog des-

criptions, program brochures, course syllabi—to assure that the documents are accurate and useful. How an institution evaluates these programs, how it develops new curricula, and how it assures the adequacy of its overall educational offerings in fulfilling its mission and purposes should also be included in the self-study.

Some institutions conduct widespread continuing education programs; others have special programs for the adult student. Study abroad programs can be an integral part of an institution's educational opportunities. Athletic programs frequently have a substantial impact on the institution. These programs should not be forgotten or passed over lightly in the self-study process.

Support programs, particularly those involving student services and learning resources, should receive careful attention. Residential campuses will differ markedly from commuter campuses. Research universities will have needs different from colleges. Development and alumni programs are often critical to institutions, and an assessment of them should be included in the self-study.

Evaluative Criterion Three

"The institution is accomplishing its purposes."

It is not enough to demonstrate clarity and appropriateness of purpose or adequacy of resources and organization; the institution must be able to demonstrate positive results as well. The self-study process must consider the broad range of institutional outcomes if it is to measure the effectiveness of the institution in meeting its purposes. Each stated purpose implies a set of results to be obtained.

For example, an institution may have taken as one purpose the recruitment and development of "outstanding" faculty members. The measure of its success is to be found in comparing the actual faculty characteristics against the institution's definition of "outstanding." An institution having as a purpose the generation of new knowledge through research would measure its achievement of purpose by examining what its research record is and what it has accomplished: papers and books published, research students trained, research in progress. An institution concerned with student development apart from formal instruction needs to consider how students change during the college years; measures, including such informal ones as faculty opinion, can be appropriate ways to determine how well this purpose is being achieved.

A central concern of educational institutions is the educational achievement of students. While measuring educational outcomes is both an art and a science, every institution has available information on student educational achievement. Longitudinal studies of student grades during college provide valuable information on faculty opinion of student achievement. Follow-up studies of what students do after leaving the institution (and where they do it) give insight on how well the institution's educational programs are serving its students. Entrance tests such as the SAT and ACT batteries and subject matter tests are indicators of the outcomes of the admissions process; when combined with exit tests (such as the GRE) they can show some of the effects of the educational program on the students.

The total range of influences which bear on a student's growth toward desired outcomes are more generally recognized today than they once were. Consequently, evaluating an institution's success in accomplishing its purposes will usually involve assessing a wide variety of structured and unstructured, curricular and extracurricular experiences. It will also require studying how each facet of the institution is actually contributing to those experiences.

Evaluative Criterion Four

"The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes."

This criterion speaks to the institution's potential for continuing effectiveness, and the Self-Study Report must provide evidence that such continuing effectiveness is likely. Past and present success as well as able leadership, adequate resources, and sound planning speak to an institution's ability to respond to future challenges while maintaining its effectiveness and improving its quality. The institution's plans for improvement resulting from the self-study effort also speak to this criterion.

To continue to accomplish its purposes, an institution must confront problems and be alert to opportunities. In the self-study process, the institution should identify plans and structures which should maintain those strengths and resolve those concerns. No institution is so excellent that it need not seek ways to make improvements. Each self-study process should identify those opportunities for improvement and suggest ways in which the opportunities can be realized.

Effective planning structures provide the means to modify goals, develop programs, alter methods of instruction, cope with shifting levels and sources of support, and continually monitor institutional vitality. It is never enough simply to

identify the existence of a plan or of a planning committee. Relating the findings of the self-study process to the institution's plans should give some evidence of the effectiveness of the institution's planning processes.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE

Some questions the institution may wish to consider in its self-study process related to Evaluative Criterion One include:

1. What are the institution's published mission and purposes?
2. How do the institution's mission and purposes relate to the basic charter or statutes?
3. Are the mission and purposes clearly and consistently stated and accepted by students, faculty, administration, governing boards and the community at large?
4. How does the institution support its claim that its mission and purposes are appropriate to a postsecondary educational institution?
5. In what ways can the institution relate its educational programs and activities to its stated mission and purposes?
6. How easily can the institution measure its success in meeting its stated purposes?
7. How does the institution review and revise its mission and purposes?
8. In what ways do the mission and purposes enhance or inhibit processes of change?
9. What are the implications of recent or impending institutional changes on the institution's mission and purpose?

CRITERION TWO

Some questions the institution may wish to consider in its self-study process related to Evaluative Criterion Two include:

Governance and Administration

1. How is the institution governed?
2. How has governance changed over time?
3. In what ways does the system of governance assist or hinder the institution in carrying out its mission and purposes?

4. What is the administrative structure of the institution?

5. How has this structure changed over time?

6. In what ways does it assist or hinder the institution in carrying out its mission and purposes?

Human Resources

1. What are the characteristics of the institution's human resources—students, instructional staff, administrative staff, support staff, governing boards? (Descriptive characteristics may include number, gender, age, academic or experiential background, degrees, aptitudes, and others.)

2. How have these characteristics changed over time?

3. In what ways do these characteristics assist or hinder the institution in carrying out its mission and purposes?

Financial Resources

1. What are the characteristics of the institution's financial resources? (Include sources, amounts, allocation and reallocation, budgetary procedures, and others.)

2. How have these characteristics changed over time?

3. In what ways do the current financial resources assist or hinder the institution in meeting its needs and in carrying out its mission and purposes?

Physical Resources
(including library, instructional resources, and laboratories)

1. What are the characteristics of the physical facilities and equipment of the institution?

2. How have these characteristics changed over time?

3. In what ways do they assist or hinder the institution in meeting its needs and carrying out its mission and purposes?

Educational Programs and Curriculum

1. What are the characteristics of the educational programs and learning experiences at the institution? (Be sure to include study abroad programs, intercol-

legiate athletics, off-campus programs, special programs offered only at certain times of the year, etc.)

2. How have these characteristics changed over time?

3. In what ways do these programs and learning experiences assist or hinder the institution in meeting its needs and in carrying out its mission and purposes?

Institutional Services

1. What services does the institution provide to develop and improve its human resources (i.e., student services, faculty and staff development programs)?

2. How have these services changed over time?

3. In what ways do these services assist or hinder the institution in carrying out its mission and purposes?

4. What services does the institution provide to the communities of which it is a part (the local community, professional groups)?

5. How have these services changed over time?

6. In what ways do these services assist or hinder the institution in carrying out its mission and purposes?

CRITERION THREE

Some questions the institution may wish to consider in its self-study process related to Evaluative Criterion Three include:

Quality of Student Achievement

1. How does the institution define the quality of student achievement needed to fulfill its mission and purposes?

2. How does the institution measure the quality of student achievement (e.g., transcripts, placement records, test scores, graduate follow-up studies, etc.)?

3. How do those measurements help to confirm the institution's claim that it is accomplishing its purposes?

Quality of Administrative and Educational Services

1. How does the institution define the quality of administrative and educational services needed to fulfill its mission and purposes?

2. How does the institution measure the quality of administrative and educational services (e.g., research, publications, inservice training, performances, evaluations, awards, evidence of due process and academic freedom, etc.)?

3. How do those measurements help to confirm the institution's claim that it is accomplishing its purposes?

Quality of Institutional Life

1. How does the institution define the quality of institutional life needed to fulfill its mission and purposes?

2. How does the institution measure the quality of institutional life (e.g., retention of students and faculty, student and faculty morale, alumni responsiveness, etc.)?

3. How do those measurements help to confirm the institution's claim that it is accomplishing its purposes?

Quality of Contribution to Outside Communities

1. How does the institution define the quality of its contribution to outside communities needed to fulfill its mission and purposes?

2. How does the institution measure the quality of its contribution to outside communities (e.g., community support, professional offices held, etc.)?

3. How do these measurements help to confirm the institution's claim that it is accomplishing its purposes?

Other Evidence

1. What other kinds of evidence does the institution use to demonstrate its effectiveness?

CRITERION FOUR

Some questions the institution may wish to consider in its self-study process related to Evaluative Criterion Four include:

Past and Present Experience

1. How does the history of the institution help to demonstrate that it can continue to accomplish its purposes in the future?

2. How do the current characteristics of the institution help to support the institution's claim that it can continue to accomplish its purposes?

Plans for the Future

1. What plans does the institution have to maintain or enhance its human, physical, and financial resources?

2. How do these plans help demonstrate that the institution can continue to accomplish its purposes?

3. What changes in organization, programs and services does the institution foresee and how does it plan to effect those changes?

4. How will the implementation of these changes affect the institution's ability to continue to accomplish its purposes?

Continuing Planning Processes

1. What are the institution's ongoing planning processes and how were they developed?

2. How will the institution's planning processes assist it to meet future needs?

3. How does the institution evaluate its planning processes?

Impact of the Self-Study Process

1. What plans does the institution have to maintain strengths and alleviate concerns identified in the self-study effort?

2. How will the findings and recommendations of the current self-study process be related or integrated into the ongoing institutional planning processes?

IV. Reporting the Self-Study

The Purposes of the Report

An institution's Self-Study Report plays specific roles in the Commission's processes:

- it serves as the institution's formal application for initial or continued accreditation;
- it demonstrates the institution's ability to analyze its effectiveness and develop plans for its own improvement;
- it provides evidence that the institution fulfills the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation;
- it succinctly summarizes information necessary for the on-site evaluation, the review process, and Commission action.

The report is the institution's clear presentation which demonstrates that it has conducted a thorough self-study process and has found that it meets the Commission's Criteria. It should be a well-written, readable *narrative*, not a collection of tables, charts, and graphs. It should be a concise yet thorough *summary* of the findings of the self-study process, not a point-by-point or questionnaire-by-questionnaire replication of it. It should be written with the other materials its readers will have access to in mind. Since the Self-Study Report is a part of a set of materials—which includes Basic Institutional Data Forms, faculty and student handbooks, and the catalog—it need not repeat at length information that its readers will find elsewhere. The documents for comprehensive evaluations are listed in the *Handbook*, pp. 32-33.

The Three Essential Elements

There is no single way to organize the Self-Study Report. Each institution is encouraged to present its report in the manner best suited to its own purposes and needs, flowing from its self-study plan and process. However, while there are various ways to structure the Self-Study Report, its uses in the Commission's evaluation process require that *every* report contain **three essential elements:**

- an **introduction** containing certain matters of information and providing a context for the evaluation;

- the **body of the report** which, regardless of how it is organized, provides an evaluation of the institution in terms of the Criteria for Accreditation (including the General Institutional Requirements and the Evaluative Criteria);

- a **final section** in which the institution makes its request for the affiliation sought, as well as any changes requested in its Statement of Affiliation Status.

The First Essential Element

The first essential element of every Self-Study Report addressed to the Commission is a clear, concise introduction which provides certain information to give the reader a context within which to read what follows. This introduction should describe:

- ***The purposes of the report.*** The purposes of the report should be specified, so that readers will understand what follows. One purpose will be to gain or continue accreditation, but there may be other purposes as well.

- ***The self-study process which led to the report.*** How committees were established and staffed, the methods used to insure appropriate participation in the process, any special or unique features of the self-study plan should all be discussed.

- ***The organization of the report.*** Because each institution may organize its report's contents differently, a brief explanation of the basic structure of the report is of great assistance to readers.

- ***A summary of the accreditation history of the institution.*** This brief section should summarize when the institution first became affiliated with the Commission, when it was first accredited, when it last underwent a comprehensive evaluation, and any focused evaluations and/or changes approved by the Commission since the most recent comprehensive evaluation.

- ***How the report will present the institution's response to the most recent NCA report.*** Since the visiting team receives copies of the most recent comprehensive Team Report and

formal institutional response, as well as copies of subsequent focused reports and formal responses, and information on any other changes approved by the Commission, the institution should comment on where and how the current Self-Study Report will treat concerns identified by previous Commission reviews. The report may treat the institution's subsequent actions to eliminate or alleviate those concerns in a variety of ways (e.g., in the introduction itself, as part of the sections of the report devoted to the areas to which the concerns were relevant, or in a separate chapter), but the way the concerns will be addressed in the report should be described at the outset.

- ***Changes and/or significant developments since the most recent comprehensive evaluation.*** The Commission's requirement that all institutions affiliated with it be evaluated periodically is partially designed to monitor the changes that institutions undergo. Significant changes that have occurred since the last comprehensive evaluation should be explained in the introduction so that the visiting team will understand the current character of the institution.

- ***Unusual aspects of the institution.*** The introduction should orient the reader to the special qualities, programs, structures which the institution thinks distinguish it. The better informed Commission representatives are, the better able they will be to consider the institution in terms of its own mission and purposes.

The Second Essential Element

The body of the Self-Study Report may be organized in a variety of ways, **but it must provide an evaluation of the institution in terms of the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation** as discussed in the previous chapter. However it is organized, this part of the report must demonstrate through the evidence it provides that the institution has conducted a self-study process which enabled it to measure itself against the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. The reader is referred to Chapter III for information on what is needed in this section of the report.

Some institutions structure their reports around the Criteria; others choose to organize their reports around functional topics with a concluding chapter in which each criterion is explicitly mentioned together with a description of where and how the

body of the report substantiates the claim that the criterion is fulfilled. Other organizational schemes work equally well, depending on the institution's goals for the process.

All reports must provide explicit evidence that the institution meets each of the **General Institutional Requirements**. That information can be in the body of the report or constitute the first appendix.

The Self-Study Report need not contain detailed information readily available in other documents. For example, course lists are available in the catalog; personnel policies can be found in faculty and staff handbooks. The report should briefly summarize such information and refer its readers to the document in which it appears in full for elaboration. Statistical information should be treated in the same fashion: the report should *summarize* and *interpret* rather than reproduce it. Supporting information and data may be included in appendices or catalogued in an annotated bibliography of materials that will be available to team members when they are on campus.

The Third Essential Element

In the final section of the Self-Study Report, the institution states its request for the status sought, and justifies any changes it wants in its Statement of Affiliation Status. The institution's rationale for each of its requests will be a summary judgment supported by reference to the salient points discussed in the body of the Self-Study Report. Its rationale for the status sought should refer to the Criteria for Accreditation.

Basic Institutional Data Forms

Each institution is required to complete a set of **Basic Institutional Data Forms.** These forms, which are sent to the institution by the Commission, ask for certain kinds of quantitative information which assists the team in its qualitative evaluation. The forms may be bound into the Self-Study Report as an appendix or may be submitted as a separate document.

V. The Self-Study Report for Initial and Continued Candidacy

This chapter supplements the information in the preceding chapters by highlighting the special information needed in a Self-Study Report for candidacy. The institution preparing for an evaluation for initial or continued candidacy should be thoroughly familiar with the information provided throughout this *Guide*.

The Three Essential Elements

Like the Self-Study Report for initial or continued accreditation, the Self-Study Report for initial or continued candidacy must contain three essential elements:

- an **introduction** containing certain matters of information and providing a context for the evaluation
- the **body of the report** which, regardless of how it is organized, provides an evaluation of the institution in terms of the Criteria for Candidacy
- a **final section** which provides the institution's request for the status sought and its support for the request

The type of information required in all three sections is quite similiar to the report for accreditation. The second element, addressing the Criteria, differs because the Evaluative Criteria are different. The discussion of the Evaluative Criteria must change with each report for continued candidacy. Through its successive Self-Study Reports, the candidate institution demonstrates not only that it still meets the Evaluative Criteria for candidacy, but also continues to move closer to the goal of fulfilling the Evaluative Criteria for accreditation.

The First Essential Element

The first essential element of the Self-Study Report for candidacy is the same as that for accreditation as described in this *Guide* on pages 23-24.

The Second Essential Element

The body of the Self-Study Report provides evidence that the institution meets the Criteria for candidacy:

A. The General Institutional Requirements

It is particularly important that an institution seeking or maintaining candidacy with the Commission provide explicit evidence that it meets each of the thirteen **General Institutional Requirements.** Even though this information has already been sent to the Commission, the requirements must be identified and addressed as an integral part of the Self-Study Report. The team, the review process, and the Commission must be able to judge that the Requirements are met. This will continue to be an integral part of the Self-Study Report throughout the candidacy period and as the institution seeks initial accreditation.

B. The Evaluative Criteria

Evaluative Criterion One: **"The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes, consistent with its mission and appropriate to a postsecondary educational institution."**

This Evaluative Criterion is the same for accreditation.

Evaluative Criterion Two: **"The institution has effectively organized adequate human, financial and physical resources into educational and other programs so that it is accomplishing its immediate purposes."**

This differs from the second Evaluative Criterion for accreditation in that it speaks of accomplishing immediate purposes, which acknowledges that a candidate institution is not yet fully developed to the point at which it has the ability to accomplish all of its purposes. In addition to having organized effectively its current resources, a candidate must give evidence that it is accomplishing its current purposes. By requiring the inclusion of documentation of institutional effectiveness, this criterion differs from the second Evalua-

tive Criterion for accreditation. It also differs in that it requires that the candidate—in addition to having organized its current resources effectively—must be accomplishing its current purposes.

Evaluative Criterion Three: **"The institution is following realistic plans to acquire and organize any additional resources needed to accomplish its stated purposes."**

This directs attention to the candidate's plans for development within the candidacy period. It requires that the candidate demonstrate that it has conducted a self-study which has identified its strengths and areas of concern as well as additional resources needed and has done the necessary planning—for students, faculty, staff, curriculum, financial and physical resources—so that it can realistically be expected to accomplish all its stated purposes within the candidacy period.

Evaluative Criterion Four: **"The institution has the potential to achieve accreditation within the candidacy period."**

A candidate institution develops a plan and timetable to achieve accreditation in six years or less. The plan and timetable should be appropriate and realistic.

In demonstrating that it meets this criterion, the institution must consider each of the Evaluative Criteria for accreditation and indicate which criteria it does not currently meet and what it must do to meet all of them.

The Criteria are discussed in detail in Chapter II of *A Handbook of Accreditation* and in Chapter III of this *Guide*.

The Third Essential Element

The third essential element of every Self-Study Report is a final section in which the institution makes its request for the affiliation sought. The requirements for this section are discussed in Chapter IV of this *Guide*.

VI. Focused Evaluations

Focused evaluations do not require the comprehensive institutional self-study outlined in the rest of the *Guide* nor do they require a comprehensive Self-Study Report. An institution's preparation for a focused evaluation will vary in nature and scope according to the specific areas to be examined. Its report for a focused evaluation will center on those areas. In addition, the institution's materials for the evaluation will include any documents it believes the team should have before arriving on campus, including but not limited to relevant portions of the Basic Institutional Data Forms, catalogs, and faculty and student handbooks.

Institutional Report for a Focused Evaluation

The report any given institution prepares will be shaped by the specific issues that prompted the evaluation, but all institutional reports for focused evaluations will have **three essential elements:**

- an introduction
- an examination of the area of focus and/or the requested change
- a summary rationale for any requested changes in the institution's Statement of Affiliation Status

The **first essential element** of an institutional report for a focused evaluation is an introduction in which the institution briefly cites the Commission action or policy that prompted the evaluation, discusses the process by which the report has been prepared, and explains the organization of the report.

The **second essential element** of a focused report is an evaluation of the areas to be examined. If the focused evaluation is being conducted to assess progress in responding to previous Commission concerns, this section of the report will explain the actions that have been taken since the last evaluation. It should evaluate the progress made and indicate any further actions that may be planned. Depending on the areas of focus, this part of the report may be supplemented by audited financial statements, Board minutes, curriculum information, or other appendices which document the progress summarized in the report itself.

If the focused evaluation is being conducted under the Commission's *"Policy on Changes Affecting the Affiliation Status of an Institution,"* this section of the report should include five points:

- a concise statement of the requested change and the reasons for proposing it
- evidence that the institution has the necessary internal and external approvals to initiate the change
- evidence that the purposes of the change are clear and appropriate to the institution's purposes
- an analysis of the anticipated effect of the proposed change on the other parts of the institution
- evidence that the institution has organized adequate human, financial, and physical resources and processes to initiate, maintain and monitor the change and to assure acceptable quality

For further information on institutional change, see Chapter VI of *A Handbook of Accreditation.*

The **third essential element** of an institutional report for a focused evaluation is a summary rationale for any changes requested in its Statement of Affiliation Status.

The institutional report for a focused evaluation has no required length. Some will be brief; others will be lengthy. The guideline in preparing the report should be that it cover each of these essential elements adequately.

For further information on the focused evaluation, see Chapter III of *A Handbook of Accreditation* and Chapter VI of *A Manual for the Evaluation Visit.*

VII. Resources for Self-Study

Resources from the Commission

A primary resource for information on self-study and evaluation is the Commission itself. Commission materials pertinent to an institution's evaluation are usually sent two years before the on-site visit.

Papers and Publications. Commission staff members have developed papers on the evaluation and accreditation process which are available on request. The NCA *Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Spring 1980), contains "Postsecondary accreditation: A Current Bibliography," by H.R. Kells and Mary Patricia Robertson. Articles on self-study appear regularly in the *Quarterly*.

The Combined Data and Evaluation Form. This document is an instrument designed to assist institutions preparing for evaluation for accreditation. The Combined Data and Evaluation Form uses the Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation as an organizing framework. Each criterion is examined in relation to a set of questions which serve as an inquiry guide. The questions in the instrument are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. One use may be as a source of ideas to be modified by the institution as is fitting. They may be especially helpful to get self-study committees started on the task. $4.00.

A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement, 1986. This document includes papers submitted by presenters at the 1986 Annual Meeting, including the Self-Study Institute and the General Interest Sessions. Self-Study Institute materials provide discussions on the interrelationships of the Evaluative Criteria for particular groups of institutions and on specific topics related to each of the criteria. $10.50.

Selected Self-Study Plans. The development of the self-study prospectus or plan is a critical first step in an institution's process for initiating and completing its self-study effort and preparing a report for the Commission. This document available from the Commission office includes several self-study plans from a variety of institutions. (Limit one copy per institution.)

Selected Self-Study Reports

Representatives of institutions undertaking self-studies often ask for "good examples" from other institutions. The staff of the Commission have identified a number of such examples.

In identifying these examples, the Commission wishes to emphasize that **they are not the only good examples it has received; that these materials are examples, not prescribed models; and that no successful self-study merely replicates the self-study of another institution.** These examples should be used to stimulate each self-study steering committee to develop its own self-study plan and report—a plan and report that are uniquely suited to its own purposes, organization and programs. There is no one "best pattern" for an institutional self-study or report. Institutional representatives should note that any pre-1982 reports they may have on hand do not address the Criteria, which is now required in the Self-Study Report.

Officials of these institutions have agreed to provide copies at cost of their self-study reports to representatives of other North Central Association institutions engaged in the self-study process. Please contact the institutions directly.

1. *Dodge City Community College, Dodge City KS 67801*

   Dodge City Community College is a rural, public, locally-supported and -governed, coeducational institution, accredited at the associate's degree-granting level. First accredited: 1966. Enrollment: 917 FTE.

   A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1985-86. The self-study steering committee structured the self-study process around the Commission's Evaluative Criteria; each criterion was assigned to a separate subcommittee. Conducted in conjunction with a community-based planning process, the College's self-study process, summarized succinctly in this Report, contributed to the institution's ability to chart a future course which would ensure relevant quality instructional programs as funding sources and student populations change.

   Contact: Gay Dahn, President

2. *Grand View College, Des Moines IA 50316*

   Grand View College is a comprehensive, private, not-for-profit, coeducational institution, affiliated with the

Lutheran Church of America and accredited at the bachelor's degree-granting level. First accredited: 1959. Enrollment: 1,099 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1984-85. Since its previous comprehensive evaluation by the Commission, Grand View College has undergone a period of rapid growth in its baccalaureate programs. Grand View utilizes the findings presented in a report of a 1982 visit by a team from the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America as an important component of its comprehensive self-study process. In a report organized around the Criteria for Accreditation, the college demonstrates that it meets the criteria, has responded to the concerns identified by the most recent NCA team, and supports its request for removal of a stipulation on its expansion at the bachelor's degree-granting level by demonstrating achievements in its new program areas. The chapter on the college's accomplishment of its purposes utilizes information from a variety of sources, surveys and instruments.

3. *Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn MI 48128*

Henry Ford Community College is a public, state and locally supported community college, accredited at the associate's degree-granting level. First accredited: 1949. Enrollment: 8,066 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1984-85. Henry Ford Community College relied on its existing faculty committee and administrative structure to conduct its self-study and prepare the written report. The report is organized around the Commission's four Evaluative Criteria. The chapter discussing Criterion Two is divided into several sub-sections dealing with the major functional areas of the institution. Each chapter contains not only descriptions of the areas under consideration, but also analytical and evaluative sections. In a concluding section, the College states that it meets the Evaluative Criteria and its reasons for this conclusion.

Contact: Richard C. Hespen, Dean of Academic Education

4. *Illinois College, Jacksonville IL 62650*

Illinois College is a private, coeducational institution, accredited at the bachelor's degree-granting level. First accredited: 1913. Enrollment: 773 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1984-85. Illinois College organized its self-study around the four Evaluative Criteria with emphasis on the education program as the most important resource of the College; all other resources were sought, obtained and organized to support and enhance the academic program. The College was especially interested in analyzing the changes which had occurred since the last comprehensive visit. The self-study coordinator and the steering committee appointed five committees to address the basic sections of the self-study. The report concludes with a plan for future development.

Contact: John Nies, Dean of the College

5. *Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Kalamazoo MI 49009*

Kalamazoo Valley Community College is a public, coeducational institution, accredited at the associate's degree-granting level. First accredited: 1972. Enrollment: 3,987 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1985-86. KVCC's goal throughout the self-study process was to promote an open and honest institutional evaluation, to share results widely, and to take corrective actions as soon as possible. The Report provides cogent and clear evidence of the genuineness of the self-study effort and the results of that process. The self-study process implemented at the College directly involved over 70 employees and students and indirectly involved many more as volunteers or appointees to the Steering Committee (16 members) and five subcommittees of 11-14 members. The Steering Committee functioned primarily as a planning and report review group. Planning functions included preparation of the Self-Study Prospectus, development of charges for the subcommittees, and development of potential information sources/needs for each area of the College.

Subcommittees conducted evaluations for the College areas assigned to them through interviews, surveys, and the use of secondary data/information. This information was compiled into reports complete with documentation. The Steering Committee reviewed the reports and raised questions requiring further subcommittee investigation or explanation.

The final report was prepared by three members of the Steering Committee. Drafts were reviewed first by the Steering Committee as a whole, second by designees from each of the subcommittees, and third by the President and Board of Trustees. In addition to the Self-Study Report, a complete listing of all subcommittee recommendations was prepared which included current or anticipated actions to address those recommendations. This report was shared with all employees and the Board.

Contact: Nancy Wood, Self-Study Coordinator

6. *Loyola University of Chicago, Chicago IL 60611*

Loyola University is a comprehensive, private, not-for-profit, coeducational institution, affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church and accredited at the doctor's degree-granting level. First accredited: 1921. Enrollment: 11,228 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1984-85. Loyola decided that a genuinely comprehensive self-study would be an appropriate way to evaluate the University's substantial growth during the past decade and to plan for the future. The Academic Priorities Committee, a standing committee composed of faculty, students, and staff, served as the Steering Committee for the Self-Study and proposed its direction and content.

A small committee composed of the Self-Study Coordinator, the Institutional Research Director, and the Project Director prepared, distributed, coded, analyzed, and interpreted a survey instrument that was widely disseminated to faculty, students, staff, and alumni. The draft prepared by this committee was distributed to the working groups of the Academic Priorities Committee and key University administrators for review, critique, and discussion. The responses of these groups were utilized in the preparation of the final re-

port. The document is a clear and cogent analysis of a comprehensive university. The University through its self-study process achieved its goal of identifying the issues and concerns which will become the agenda for further investigation, action, and planning at Loyola in the next decade.

Contact: Alice Hayes, Associate Academic Vice President

7. *Macalester College, St. Paul MN 55105*

Macalaster College is a private, not-for-profit, coeducational institution, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA) and accredited at the bachelor's degree-granting level. First accredited: 1913. Enrollment: 1,613 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1985-86. The Report consists of two documents: (1) a comprehensive report organized around the four Evaluative Criteria for accreditation and (2) a series of appendices incorporating a wide array of planning documents, outcomes information and a Fact Book with extensive institutional information.

There was broad participation in the self-study process organized around a ten-member steering committee chaired by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and comprised of faculty, staff, and students. An English professor who coordinated the All-College Writing Program was the primary writer for the report, which was judged by those who read it to be lively and interesting. As part of the self-study, emphasis was placed on the collection of a broad array of data related to student outcomes.

Contact: Robert M. Gavin, Jr., President

8. *New Mexico Junior College, Hobbs NM 88240*

New Mexico Junior College is a public, state and locally supported, coeducational institution, accredited at the associate's degree-granting level. First accredited: 1970. FTE: 1,222.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1985-86.

New Mexico Junior College organized its self-study around the four Evaluative Criteria. Each section concluded with a discussion of specific strengths, concerns, and suggestions for further discussion and consideration. Considerable attention was given to Criterion Three including a narrative account of the impact that New Mexico Junior College has had on the lives of several families and individuals in the area.

Contact: John R. Shepherd, Vice President for In-

9. *Northeast Missouri State University, Kirksville MO 63501*

Northeast Missouri State University is a public, state-supported, coeducational institution, accredited at the specialist degree-granting level. First accredited: 1914. Enrollment: 6,270 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1984-85. Two volumes, either of which could stand on its own, constitute the report. In the first volume, the institution measures itself against the Criteria for Accreditation; the second volume does the same, but through the unique perspective provided by the institution's "value-added" model of assessment. Combined, the two reports provide a rich analysis of the institution and the impact its "value added" assessment has on all aspects of institutional life. The reports summarize a well-planned self-study process which involved a sizeable number of the institution's constituents in an effort to strengthen their commitment to the university's mission and to incorporate their findings into short- and long-range goals and priorities for the university.

Contact: Darrell W. Krueger, Dean of Instruction

10. *Saint Francis College, Fort Wayne IN 46808*

Saint Francis College is a Catholic coeducational institution of higher education in the liberal arts tradition, offering a wide range of academic programs leading to the associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees. It is largely a commuter school, only 155 of the 1310 students enrolled live on campus; there are 969 undergraduate students and 340 graduate students,

including both on- and off-campus programs. First accredited: 1957.

The institution prepared a Self-Study Report for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1985-86. Especially useful and recommended to institutions for review is the self-study committee's treatment of Criteria Three and Four. With respect to Criterion Three the institution first classified its purposes. It then documented the accomplishment of purposes through a wide variety of studies that were appropriate to each of the purposes. Chapter five, on Criterion Four, is a penetrating critique of the institution's on-going planning with strengths and concerns enumerated along with plans for improvement.

Contact: Sr. M. Joellen Scheetz, President

11. *University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis MN 55455*

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities is a public, state-supported, coeducational institution, accredited at the doctoral degree-granting level. First accredited: 1913. Enrollment: 56,043 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1985-86. In consultation with Commission staff, the University of Minnesota developed a self-study process with special emphases. The Self-Study Report, entitled *A University at the Crossroads*, contains a brief summary of how the institution continues to meet the Criteria for Accreditation. The bulk of the report centers on institutional planning, faculty research, and graduate education which, together with undergraduate education, receive careful review. The report serves as a detailed, comprehensive projection of the challenges the University confronts in fulfilling *A Commitment to Focus*, the overarching framework for the University's future recently enunciated by the President and endorsed by the Board of Regents.

Contact: Betty Wallace Robinett, Vice President for Academic Affairs

12. *University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie WI 54751*

A public, state-supported, coeducational institution, accredited at the Specialist degree-granting level. First accredited: 1928. Enrollment: 7,466 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1985-86. The self-study process emphasized broad participation, using a Coordinating Committee and 6 self-study teams. The self-study teams focused on Evaluative Criteria 2 and 3, with each team evaluating one of the following areas: governance and administration, human resources, financial resources, physical resources, educational programs and curriculum, and institutional services. To assure that the Self-Study Report would make maximum use of on-going institutional processes for planning and review, the self-study teams included representatives from the standing committees which carry out those processes. The Coordinating Committee addressed Criteria 1 and 4, summarized the work of the self-study teams and conducted additional institution-wide studies as required to complete the report.

The report, which is organized around the Evaluative Criteria, includes an introduction which describes the history and significant features of the institution, actions taken in response to the concerns of the preceding North Central evaluation, and a chronicle of recent developments. This is followed by a description of the institution's means of meeting the General Institutional Requirements. Each of the Evaluative Criteria for accreditation is separately treated. The Self-Study Report concludes with a statement which summarizes the results.

Contact: Nelva G. Runnalls, Dean for Curriculum, Research, and Graduate Studies

13. Vincennes University, Vincennes IN 47591

A rural yet large, comprehensive, publicly-supported, coeducational institution, accredited at the associate's degree-granting level. Accreditation includes a branch campus and other off-campus instructional sites. First accredited: 1956. Enrollment: 5,559 FTE.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation in 1985-86. Because one objective of the self-study process was to foster institutional openness and communication, this tightly written report summarizes a significant and complex self-study process which involved over 700 individuals from the faculty, staff, and student body.

A writing team synthesized the process into a report organized around the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. The report concludes with a prioritized list of recommendations to be integrated into the institution's planning cycle.

Contact: Phillip Summers, President

14. West Suburban College of Nursing, Oak Park IL 60302

A private, not-for-profit, coeducational institution, accredited at the bachelor's degree-granting level. First accredited: 1986. FTE: 166.

A Self-Study Report prepared for a comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation in 1985-86. West Suburban College of Nursing, a single-purpose institution, organized its self-study around the four Evaluative Criteria. The report emphasized the progress the College has made as a baccalaureate institution and identified areas in which further development is expected. Considerable attention was given to the organization of the College, the qualifications of the faculty, and the relationship with Concordia College, River Forest, IL, the institution which participates in this joint degree program. This report is for a single purpose institution, but it addresses the issues which are of concern to almost all institutions seeking initial accreditation.

Contact: Sharon Bolin, Dean

Other Resources

The following are some other resources on self-study and evaluation that may be of interest. Information on availability of these documents can be obtained from the publishers or sponsoring organizations.

Philip Chamberlain's *Academic Institution—Building Model*, a self-study process rooted in the strategic construct, specifies how to organize, analyze, and interpret institutional data using nine interactive institutional and environmental variables. The model constructs an index for assessing effectiveness of the exchange of institutional outcomes for constituent provided resources and support (Department of Higher Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405).

Paul Dressel's *Handbook of Academic Evaluation* (Jossey-Bass, 1976) offers specific information on assessing institutional effectiveness, student progress, and professional performance for decision-making in higher education.

Peter T. Ewell is editor of *Assessing Educational Outcomes*, New Directions for Institutional Research No. 47 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985), which provides an overview of many facets of research on student outcomes, shows how outcomes research programs have been organized and implemented in various settings, and provides some basic technical advice about the design of particular types of studies and the communication of results. Ewell is also the author of an NCHEMS Executive Overview, *Information on Student Outcomes: How to Get It and How to Use It* (Boulder, CO: NCHEMS, 1983), which provides pragmatic information on conceptual dimensions of student outcomes, building a student-outcomes data base, and applying student-outcomes information to institutional decision-making.

Effective Evaluation (Jossey-Bass, 1981) by Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln presents an approach combining responsive evaluation and naturalistic methodologies, and discusses how to limit and focus an inquiry and ensure the validity, reliability and objectivity of its findings.

Improving Academic Management (Jossey-Bass, 1980), edited by Paul Jedamus and Marvin W. Peterson, includes sections on Academic Planning and Research, Assessing Performance, and Allocating Resources that treat measuring institutional effectiveness.

George Keller's *Academic Strategy, The Management Revolution in Higher Education* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983) describes the significant shifts of colleges and universities to a new style of management based on strategic planning and offers an agenda for the future of higher education.

H.R. Kells' *Self-Study Processes, A Guide for Postsecondary Institutions* (Macmillan, 1983) is designed as a handbook for self-study steering committee members and other participants in self-study and accreditation activities. Kells describes the context for and the concept of self-study and suggests general models for self-study. Specific information, checklists and charts are provided for various phases of the self-study process and major sources of additional information are identified.

Richard I. Miller's *The Assessment of College Performance* (Jossey-Bass, 1979) provides practical assistance in institutional self-assessment in the form of evaluation strategies, models, case studies and specific evaluation aids such as tables, checklists, and rating forms. Miller identifies a number of measurable characteristics of postsecondary institutions that, together, determine an institution's overall quality or effectiveness.

Qualitative Data Analysis. A Sourcebook of New Methods (Sage Publications, 1984) by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Haberman, presents a conceptual framework and a variety of techniques for qualitative data analysis. This book is particularly helpful in understanding the contrasts and similarities between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Its emphasis upon the analysis of data and techniques of conclusion drawing/verification substantively expands the usefulness and applicability of this approach to evaluation. The book is complemented by an article, "Drawing Valid Meaning from Qualitative Data: Toward a Shared Craft," in *Educational Researcher*, (May, 1984).

The College Student Experiences Questionnaire by C. Robert Pace provides a measure of quality of effort students put into using the facilities and opportunities provided for their learning and development in college. (Requires external scoring.) (Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA Graduate School of Education, 405 Hildgard Ave., Los Angeles CA 90024.)

Michael Quinn Patton's *Qualitative Evaluation Methods* (Sage, 1980) focuses on strategies for generating valid and credible qualitative information which are useful in self-study. It also provides samples of different research strategies and evaluative instruments.

Understanding Accreditation (Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1983), by Kenneth E. Young, Charles M. Chambers, H.R. Kells, et al., is a comprehensive examination of how accreditation works, who participates in it, what impact it has on institutions and their various constituencies, and how it can be used to assess institutional achievements and plan improvements.

Educational Testing Service has a number of instruments for institutional self-study, evaluation, planning and faculty evaluation which might serve as useful guidelines or as a source of ideas. They include the *Institutional Goals Inventory* (IGI), *Institutional Functioning Inventory* (IFI), *Community Colleges Goals Inventory* (CCGI), *Program Self-Assessment Service* (PSAS), *Small College Goals Inventory* (SCGI), *Student Instructional Report* (SIR), and *Student Reactions to College* (SRC). (Educational Testing Service, College and University Programs, Princeton NJ 08541-0001, 609/921-9000.)

The American College Testing Program also has a number of instruments, including evaluation/survey instruments—*Student Opinion Survey, Withdrawing/Nonreturning Student Survey*, and *Alumni Survey*—offered through the ACT Evaluation/Survey Service. The College Outcomes Measures

Program (COMP) measures general education and intellectual skills through an activity inventory, a composite examination, and an objective test. (The American College Testing Program, P.O. Box 168, Iowa City IA 52243, 319/337-1000.)

A number of institutions have been involved in the programs of the National Center for Higher Education Management Service (NCHEMS) and are familiar with the outcome-oriented planning, management and evaluation framework developed by NCHEMS. NCHEMS has an extensive battery of data collection schemes and information system constructs as well as facilities, students, finances, course information, staff, and goal achievement measures. (NCHEMS, P.O. Drawer P, Boulder CO 80302, 303/447-1980.)

A battery of management analysis and development instruments and training elements is available from HEMI, the Higher Education Management Institute. (Higher Education Management Institute, 2699 S. Bayshore Dr., Suite 1000A, Coconut Grove FL 33133, 305/854-2318.)

Institutions interested in developing expertise in the assessment of experiential learning will find materials and assistance available from the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL), an educational association created to foster experiential learning and the valid and reliable assessment of outcomes. (CAEL, 10840 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 203, Columbia MD 21044, 301/997-3535.)

The Council on Graduate Schools (CGS) has developed some instruments and questionnaires to assist in the evaluation of graduate education programs. (The Council on Graduate Schools, One DuPont Circle, Washington DC 20036.)

Bibliography on Postsecondary Accreditation, by H.R. Kells, Laura Kells, and M.T. Neal (1984) is available from the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. (COPA, One Dupont Circle, Suite 305, Washington DC 20036.)

The Board's Role in Accreditation, published by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, is a useful introduction to the subject which recommends specific ways in which a Board's role in accreditation activities may be enhanced. (AGB, One Dupont Circle, Suite 400, Washington DC 20036.)

NACUBO *Writers on Financial Management* includes sixty-three articles, many of which provide ways of evaluating effective financial management, compiled by the National Association of College and University Business Officers.

(NACUBO Order Desk, One Dupont Circle, Suite 510, Washington DC 20036.)

Ratio Analysis in Higher Education, available from Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co., is a guide to assist colleges and universities in assessing the institution's financial condition. The uses of ratios, their trends and interinstitutional comparisons are displayed and explained. (Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co., 303 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago IL 60601.)

Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner & Smith's publication, *How to Read a Financial Report*, provides detailed information and illustrations about how to analyze and interpret a corporate financial statement. (Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner & Smith Inc., One Liberty Plaza, 165 Broadway, New York NY 10080.)

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* is also an excellent source of current information on publications and meetings relating to evaluation and assessment.

INDEX OF COMMISSION POLICIES

The following is an index of Commission policies with references to where information related to each policy can be found in *A Handbook of Accreditation, A Guide to Self-Study for Commission Evaluation,* and *A Manual for the Evaluation Visit.* The index appears in all three publications and is designed as a cross-reference. H/ identifies the *Handbook,* M/ the *Manual,* and G/ the *Guide* followed by the appropriate page number(s). The number ( ) following each policy identifies its internal policy number.

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